

State University of New York College at Buffalo - Buffalo State College Digital Commons at Buffalo State

Buffalo Belles Newsletters

The Madeline Davis Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual,
Transgender Archives of Western New York

1-2001

January 2001

Buffalo Belles

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buffalobelles>

Recommended Citation

Buffalo Belles, "January 2001" (2001). *Buffalo Belles Newsletters*. 97.
<http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buffalobelles/97>

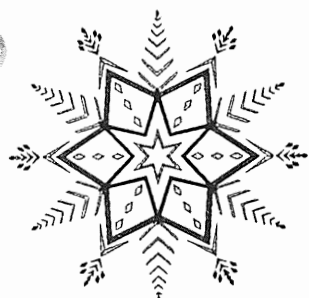
This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the The Madeline Davis Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Archives of Western New York at Digital Commons at Buffalo State. It has been accepted for inclusion in Buffalo Belles Newsletters by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons at Buffalo State. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@buffalostate.edu.



THE JOURNEY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Camille's Corner	2
Nancy's Perspective	3
A Letter from Kathy	5
Trans. Comm. News	7
Fashion, Style & You	9
Coming Events	10



THOSE WHO
DON'T RENEW THEIR
MEMBERSHIP IN THE
BELLES



THOSE WHO DO
RENEW THEIR
MEMBERSHIP IN THE
BELLES

My Trip To The Poconos

A Daily Journal by Tina Marie

PART 1

It seems like I just finished unpacking from my trip to Atlanta for the SCC and now I'm packing for my trip to the Poconos for the "Western Belles Roundup"! I love it! This time it was easy to pack. I was driving the 335 miles in my own car so I just took everything! Well, almost everything. I didn't have room for it all or I probably would have.

I had gone last year, so I knew what to expect. A lot of outfit changes, so I wanted to be prepared. I think I did pretty well and only forgot to pack some aspirin which I ended up finding there. I was disappointed that Mistress Kali and a few other PEP Buffalo members weren't going to be able to make it this year, but I was sure I would make new friends.

I had everything packed the night before and just had to get dressed. Last year I didn't drive there as Tina and this year I was going to do it. I was going to make the trip with a girl that was rather new to dressing and she has not had much experience in public. I had originally told her that I didn't feel it was a good idea for her to make the trip dressed at this stage in her new life. There was just too much for her to learn and hadn't had the time to do this in a slow progression of steps. I then felt a little hypocritical and told her if she wanted to, to go ahead. This was going to make me a bit uncomfortable for the drive because I had enough to worry about myself, let alone worry about her also.

The first thing on my "to do" list was to set up the schedule board which I had been working on.

I found a nice spot for it and I hope it helped people to know what was going on and when.

Now I could relax and talk with a few girls that were just arriving. Our first event was going to be the trip to LIPS in NYC for dinner and entertainment that evening. LIPS is a TG run nightclub. We were leaving around 9:00pm so I had some time before I had to get dressed for the evening. It was nice to see some of the familiar ranch people that had been so nice to us the year before. It was almost like I had never left. It was hard to believe it had been a whole year.

There were only about 8 of us that were going to go to LIPS, but we were going to meet 5 more there. 9:00 came and we all loaded in the van for our 1:45 minute trip there. We were chauffeured by Hamish (a ranch hand) who was very friendly and a lot of fun to be around. We were just pulling out when Bobbi remembered she forgot her camera. As we turned around the headlights of our van panned the lake shore. There were about 20 deer standing there just grazing and watching us. that was neat to see.

It was a rainy night so we parked in front of LIPS and unloaded. Then Hamish drove off to find a place to park. The place was very crowded when we first went in. We were to have table reservations, but it was going to be a 30 min. wait. I then saw my good friend Stephanie W. and went to say hello. I hadn't seen her since last year, but we talked often via computer. It was good to see her again! I don't like crowded places and was much relieved when we finally got our table. We ordered our dinner and exchanged a few photo shots to remember the night by. After dinner we were entertained by half a dozen drag queen impersonators.

Continued on page 4



CAMILLE'S CORNER

Have you made a New Year's 'Resolution List'? If you have, throw it out! Most people have things they'd like to change about themselves or they're lives and "The List" offers a handy check-off to a better, happy life. Let's be honest. By the end of January, we probably have made excuses or given up about the items on "The List". That happens to me every year and I would wager you're part of the list-slackers as well.

I plan to forget "The List" this year. Here's why. I already have one or two to-do list currently. Things to do at work; things to do at home. Not quite the same as "The List" but a list, nonetheless. I don't really need another set of "commands". Life is full of them already. And why do we need somebody else's 'idea' of what we should weigh, pay or say?

Those resolution lists lean toward restricting or fixing something in our lives: lose weight; get up earlier to accomplish more. Some of a list's items are wise or need to be done anyway: stop smoking; repair the garage; give the dog a flea dip (it was your idea to get a dog). Whatever we put on it, the list usually involves *correcting* something. As humans, we are flawed and are in constant need for improvement or to do better. But because of our nature it isn't easy change or to do something different.

Perhaps what we need to do is to be mindful of the things that are important to us and then plan to spend time on those items. Perhaps you want learn to play the piano. Or attend your child's softball games more than once or twice. Or visit ancient ruins in a foreign country.

As transgendered individuals what might be important to us? A crossdresser might want to attend an out of town convention or go downtown to a TG friendly club or bar. If you've already done that, what would you like to do next that would be important to you?

A transsexual might be considering telling a friend or family member about their gender status. Or contacting an electrologist. If you've already done that, then what would you like to do next that is important to you?

Time. And importance. Be mindful that our existence is short. Be mindful that small changes are as important as big ones. Be mindful and choose to evolve or to stay as you are. There is no 'right' answer or 'proper' list.

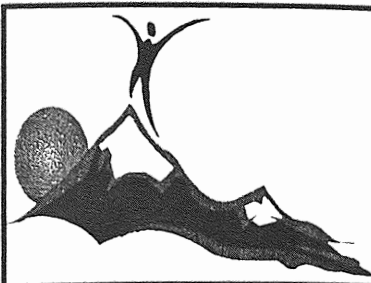
Whatever you do, enjoy your life and the people that are in it.

And throw away that list.

Have a Happy and Healthy New Year.

PS: If you are a graduate of the University of Buffalo, you may be interested to know that the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) Alumni Association has just recently been formed. I have been asked to be the Co-chairperson of the organization. We are less than a month old but already have a website up and running (<http://www.infotruer.com/ub.html>). The goals of the Association are being developed. But they include fund raising for the student group (LGBA) at U.B. In the past, donated funds were used for the annual conference held at U.B. called "OUT LOUD & PROUD" which served the LGBT community of Western New York. Feel free to contact me or the website for further information.

PPS: See you Saturday, January 6, at Secret's for their "Thank You Belles" Party, starting at 8:00pm.



The Journey is the monthly publication of the Buffalo Belles. All articles and information contained in this publication may be reprinted in full by any non-profit gender community organization without permission, provided credit is given to this newsletter and the author. The material contained herein does not necessarily express the views or opinions of the Buffalo Belles, its officers or editorial staff. Contributions of articles are welcomed. The Buffalo Belles reserve the right to edit submissions for publication for suitability, spelling, grammar and/or length. Submissions or comments should be addressed to:

Buffalo Belles, PO Box
1701, Amherst, NY 14226-
1701

Editor :
Rebecca C.

To contact the Buffalo Belles:

By Phone:
(716) 879-0973

By Mail:
Buffalo Belles
P.O. Box 1701
Amherst, NY 14226

By E-Mail:
buffalo_belles@juno.com
Buffalo Belles Website:
www.geocities.com/buffalobelles/



NANCY'S PERSPECTIVE

Hi, ladies!
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Somehow the start of 2001 doesn't have the same cheap thrill that 2000 had. Why is that? Whatever, enjoy the opportunities which come your way this year. If you make a resolution, remember to include both sides of your personality.

The holiday season is OVER! Our Christmas party was a blast - lots of goodfood, company and beautiful women. It's so much fun to get all dolled upfor the holidays. I saw a lot of nice gifts being exchanged, and the Toys-For-Tots bin did alright too. Thanks to those sisters who made this gala possible. You're the best!!

Obviously, Christmas is more than a chance to take advantage of a sale at the mall. Being with family and friends while listening to Christmas music around the tree is great. Christmas should also be the time for us to remember the true meaning of the season.

I admit to having become a l 'convention' addict the past couple of years. I've met a lot of girls at these events, and talked with some real professionals. I took note that the one

thing missing was spiritual guidance. I see doctors of all types, lawyers, vendors and political folks, but I have yet to meet a minister or priest. Why is it that these folks don't seem to be available? I see this as an underlying concern of a lot of the women I talk with at these gatherings. I have heard similar stories from a lot of transgendered people - how does God fit into the picture? These women relate to me that perhaps they have sinned, or are out of favor with the church, because of how they express themselves. These are valid concerns, but unless we have some input to the people who can answer our questions - we are at a disadvantage.

While in St. Louis for the "Fall Harvest 2000" last October, I bought the book, "The Cross & The Crossdresser" by Vanessa S. I wanted to read this book, but I have also been corresponding with the author for two years. Vanessa is a CD who is about to finish her education that will result in her becoming a minister. She recently told me she has approached the United Church of Christ about starting a TG ministry, so perhaps the void I spoke about at the various conventions will finally be filled.

Earlier, I mentioned the true meaning of the season. It is Christ's birthday. For those who are having doubts about their own relationship with God, while being a crossdresser - read the book. The powerful message she writes reminds us that God's love is one of inclusivity. He doesn't show favor, or disfavor because of a person's desires. We are human after all, but you can be assured that it makes no difference to God how we express our gender. His love is more than big enough to include anyone and everyone who will accept that love. He never gives up on us. Rather, we tend to give up on Him. Next time you are having a problem relating to being transgendered - ask God for guidance -He will help you.

Take care all this year, and enjoy!!
Your sister, Nancy

10 Most Damaging Myths about Transmen and FTM's

10. All FTM's come from the lesbian community, and after transition are heterosexual (that is, attracted to women).

9. Transexualism/transgenderism can be "cured" by psychotherapy. Transsexual men are really just lesbians.

8. FTM's did not exist until after World War II, with the advent of hormone therapy and sex-reassignment surgery.

7. Female-to-males are far rarer than male-to-female transsexuals.

6. Transmen seek to live as and be recognized as male in order to obtain male privilege and economic advantages.

5. All transmen exhibit stereotypically male behavior and want

to be as macho as possible.

4. Taking testosterone makes female-to-male transsexuals much more aggressive and angry than they were before taking hormones.

3. All FTM's want genital reconstruction as the driving force of their transition (not necessarily the social aspects that go along with masculinity).

2. Historically, all women only chose to live as men to pursue careers that were otherwise unavailable to them, to seek economic opportunities, or to justify lesbian relationships.

1. Transmen are really just butch lesbians who change sex to justify same-sex relationships or to avoid harassment.

My Trip To The Poconos*(Continued from page 1)*

They were very good at there impersonations. Most of them did do lip sinking, but the MC which was "Joan Rivers" did speak and sounded exactly like her. We decided to then check out another bar. This was a piano bar 4 blocks away. Stephanie asked if we would like to walk and I said it would be fine if it wasn't raining. (It wasn't because of my 5" heels!) I didn't want to get my hair wet or ruin my makeup.<g> So Hamish got the van and we were off to bar #2. It was not very full and I was glad of this. I am not really into piano music, but this was OK. The piano player was accompanied by the 2 singing bartenders. It was interesting to see them serving us and singing in between.

We departed for our long ride back to the ranch about 1:30. It was a long drive and almost everyone slept on the way except 2 of us and the driver! I was very tired when we got back and went to my room for some rest. Tomorrow was going to be a very busy day.

They first thing on the list for Friday was, of course, breakfast. It was being served until 10:30 and I just made it. There still weren't too many girls there yet, but each day more arrived. I was a little worried about this because I was giving a corset talk-demo in a few hours and I was afraid that there wouldn't be very many attending at this point. I had a little time to take in part of a make over demonstration being put on by Taz and Lola. Taz also had a nice display of chain type jewelry and collars along with other fetish things. There also was horseback riding available at this time but I had to pass on this for now. I did want to do this before the weekend was out, because I never had time last year and wanted to try it. The makeup demo was interesting, but I had to leave early to get ready for my corset seminar.

I set up all the things I had brought in the saloon and waited for the girls to venture in. It turned out to be a good turn out and I think almost every girl that was there at that point did make it along with some people that had just arrived. It went well and I had a lot of new material that I talked about, along with the original info I presented the year before.

Now it was time for lunch. I found a seat at a table with Constance (The former owner of "Dressing for Pleasure"). This was something I had looked forward to because she is the first person I ever spoke with years ago about what I was into. I had met her once long before I dressed and at that point I has only into shoes, corsets, and a skirt or two. She had never seen me dressed and I was waiting for an opportunity to tell her who I was. She then introduced herself to the table and we all in turn started to introduce ourselves to her.

When it was my turn I said "You know me!" She looked and I told her where I was from and that was all she needed. She got this huge smile on her face and said XXX (my male name) That made me feel so good for her to see how far I had come since she first met me. She is such a nice and understanding person.

Next was off for a change into my maids outfit for the Maid Service 101 seminar. This was put on by Stephanie W. and Tiger Lady. They presented a lot of useful information and I found the talk very interesting. Stephanie is so into it and I love seeing all her outfits. She is also into the little girl look and she always looks so cute!

Next on the agenda was the a seminar on "Channeling" and to talk about the book "Kaleidoscope" This was put on by Constance and Eileen Slater (The new owner of DFP) Channeling is a kind of reading where you can tell about a persons past. I had a private Channeling done later. I was hoping that she hold tell me that I was a girl in the Victorian era, because that is kind of what I had thought. She actually told me that I had never been a girl, but was more a servant to women of upper class. I always envied women and worshiped them. OK. This kind of works. She also told me that I was on the verge to be a woman in my next life and I am trying to learn what ever I can now to get ready for it. This kind-of works also. She didn't tell me anything that actually made a believer out of me, but it was interesting.

The book, "Kaledoscope", was written by Constance and talks about psychic channeling, sexual fetishism and sadomasochism. It covers a lot of topics and I hope to read my autographed copy soon.

We had a small break before dinner and Micki (another maid) and I waited on the few bar patrons for some much needed practice (at least for me) and to earn some points for the Maid competition that was to be judged all weekend.

Now for dinner and I also helped out with waiting on the dinner guests along with Micki and Stephanie. I had changed for dinner, but felt I could still wait on people. I think I got a demerit when Constance said to me "Out of uniform". I just said "Yes Mamm" and continued on with my work.

Part 2 continued next month

Dear Sisters and brothers,

From Kathy Lorraine

If you missed the Christmas Party/meeting, you missed a good one. Especially after one made it into the building! Accomplishing that was a real trick as the parking lot was an accident just waiting to happen. Now none of us are real surprised to find ice and snow to walk on, but add the uneven gravel base and an all to short lived thaw to the picture, and you had a recipe for disaster! In our eight years here, I've never seen it so bad. Probably some are saying "Nah, it really wasn't so bad, Kathy is just getting old and wobbly on her feet." Maybe that is it, but I was sure glad I wear flats. Can't imagine what it must have been like in heels. Maybe those stiletto 5" heels some wear bite through the ice and give a grip.

Just a tip. It is possible to park in some areas along the driveway that leads to the back lot. There is an open door by the vestibule of the living room, which would make for a much shorter trek. For the smokers, this vestibule does contain benches for sitting on and a large ash tray. Probably a better place to indulge your habit than standing outdoors by the rear doors.

Once one made it inside, it was found that we were not in our usual meeting area, but another group was. This was unexpected, but I would guess with all the inclement weather this year, that that group was making up for a time they had canceled previously. No problem, we just switched to our alternative upstairs room.

Tina had taken on the task of adding some decorations, and I know Nancy came early to help her set it up. They did a marvelous job. It was quite festive and didn't look like school room at all.

Patti brought the refreshments. Quite an array of snacks and goodies to munch on. Many others also brought items, it was very much appreciated by all. It sure was a nice change from our usual pizza and chips. So besides leaving with a gift from our exchange, many also left with a doggie bag of the delights to nibble on later.

A big hand of applause for all of you who brought the food, gifts for underprivileged children, and the work put in on setting up for our evening. It was much appreciated by the excellent turnout we had. This was probably our largest attended meeting ever, not counting the Shelia Kirk one a couple of years ago. Hopefully it is only a harbinger of what the meetings will be like in the New Year.

Just a reminder speaking of the New Year. We will try to hold meetings on the second Saturday of the month, as before. We haven't made our reservations with the church as of this writing, but will assume that is when the next meeting shall be. By the time this goes to print, I will have verified with them, so check the calendar to make sure!

Another reminder is that our favorite bar, Secrets, is holding an appreciation party for the Belles on January 6 starting at 9PM. Secrets is located at 20 Allen St. if you've never been there before. There is a parking lot behind the building, accessible from the first side street. They do charge \$5 to park, but there is a guard there to watch your car, and the lot is plowed. One gets a ticket that covers any drink of your choice. There is a rear door to Secrets, right from the parking lot. Not a bad deal for the convenience and safety involved.

Our party is being held in the upstairs. There is a set of stairs going up, right by that rear door, or behind the bathrooms. Upstairs has a changing room available also. Although this is billed as Buffalo Belles Appreciation Party, I'd expect you will have a chance to meet with other girls who are not a member of our group. Probably the better name would be TG Appreciation night.

Continued on next page

From Kathy Lorraine
Continued from page 5

Dues are due. Yes, it is time for our annual renewal of membership. As it has been in the past, dues for full membership is \$25. Those who cannot attend the meetings, or infrequently at best, can still receive all the glory and stature of membership for a paltry \$15.

For those who joined in the past year, your dues are prorated to the time you joined. Next to your name on your envelope is the amount that you owe and your membership status. F25, which most will have, means Full \$25 is due. A PD means you are already paid up. As in the past, you will receive the newsletter through the March issue. If you

DECEMBER MEETING ATTENDANCE

Janice G.
Jean H.
Patti J.
Holly I.
Danalyn D.
Kathy L.
Colleen R.
Gina A.
Nancy W.
Brenda H.
Melissa H.
Kendra K.
Jo S.
Tina Marie

Jana F.
April
Ann Z.
Kali W.
Bobbi S.
Denise P.
Jennifer M.
Karen & Sharon T.-débutante
Guests and past members:
Terressa H.
Victoria
Terri & Sue
Bratt
Lauren Y.

haven't paid by then, bye bye.

Anyone who is suffering from an economic disparity that keeps them from paying, but wishes to remain a member must contact Camille or myself directly to ask that an exception be made.

Either pay at a coming meeting, or send your check or cash in to the PO Box. We certainly hope that you'll renew and be with us for the coming year.

At this time, I just want to wish everyone of you a most happy and joyous holiday season. -

Kathy Lorraine

TRANS COMMUNITY NEWS

TRANSGENDER ACTIVISTS SEEK LEGAL PROTECTION
By Inga Sorensen

The evening began with a gentle solidarity.

The roughly 50 folks who had come to Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village Tuesday evening were asked to observe a moment of silence for those who had perished in violent acts simply for being who they were: transgender people.

On each folding chair a sheet of paper was placed listing 17 named and unnamed transgender or gender-transgressive people who died during the past 12 months "due to prejudice, hatred, and violence." The roll call of the dead included Amanda Milan of New York City, whose throat was slashed in front of the Port Authority Bus Terminal in June. (More than 300 people crammed into a July memorial service for Milan, whose killing, some say, marked a turning point in the political movement to obtain justice for transgender people.)

November 28 is the annual Day of Remembrance honoring the transgender dead, and on this night, people collected at the Village church for a forum that primarily addressed New York's new hate crimes law and its applicability to crimes against transgender people. Representatives from local district attorneys' offices, the New York Police Department, the state attorney general's office, U.S. Rep. Jerrold Nadler's office, and transgender and gay organizations were among those in attendance.

It took 11 years of legislative tussling to pass a gay-inclusive hate crimes bill in the Empire State. The measure, which was signed into law July 10 and took effect Oct. 8, stiffens penalties for the commission of crimes based on, among other categories, gender and sexual orientation. It does not include explicit protections for transgender people by, for example, covering gender identity.

The law requires all of the state's law enforcement agencies to keep statistics on bias crimes, and a jury or judge can find that a crime was motivated by prejudice even when the defendant was mistaken about the victim's identity.

"The truly ironic thing is that the people who are most hated are those who are excluded from the hate crimes bill," said panelist Paisley Currah, a political science professor at Brooklyn College and co-author of the recently published *Transgender Equality: A Handbook for Activists and Policymakers*.

Currah noted that four states -- Minnesota, California,

Vermont, and Missouri -- have hate crimes laws that contain language that explicitly include crimes committed against people because of their gender identity or gender expression.

Currah then criticized backers of New York's law for purposely excluding transgender people. "They knew what they were doing," when they made that decision, Currah told the audience.

The new law was heavily promoted by the Hate Crimes Bill Coalition, which includes the Empire State Pride Agenda, the state's largest gay political organization and a primary player in the push for the measure.

"It was a political calculation," conceded ESPA's legislative counsel Ross Levi, who journeyed down from Albany to appear on the panel. But, he told onlookers, he did not believe the lack of trans-explicit language negated transgender people from being covered under the law (a contention bolstered by remarks from representatives for the Manhattan, Queens, and Bronx district attorneys, all of whom said their offices would apply the hate crimes statute in crimes they felt were motivated by anti-transgender bias. And, they said, they felt a court would back their interpretation and application of the law in those cases).

"It's a no-brainer for us," said Eric Rosenbaum, a Queens County assistant district attorney who works in the Special Victims Bureau.

Kristine Hamann, executive assistant district attorney for New York County, agreed: "It will be fine," she assured the crowd. Hamann said prosecutors are "the ones who have to make the case" to the courts, which she felt should pose little problem in this regard. Why? "Because the word gender is the word gender -- it's very broad."

But Laura Edidin, director of legal services for the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, which provides counseling, advocacy, information, and referrals to survivors of anti-gay violence, highlighted the fact that the new law is a statewide measure.

"I'm not worried about the people here," she said, referring to the local district attorney reps on the panel. Instead, it's those who were not there -- those from the small towns, rural enclaves, and other locales throughout the state's sprawling terrain -- those are the folks one must wonder about. How, Edidin inquired, will those police, prosecutors, and judges "handle the force of this law?" (Some attendees also spoke about the abuse and dismissive attitudes they say they encountered from the NYPD.)

Continued on next page

Transgender activists seek legal protection
Continued From Page 7

There are hundreds of local law enforcement agencies in New York, all of which will need to learn how to identify and handle hate crimes -- and there are dozens upon dozens of prosecutors, each with his or her own prerogatives. Thus, while some local prosecutors and some Hate Crimes Bill Coalition members have said they will attempt to ensure the interpretation of the law is broadly applied, it remains to be seen how successful that effort will in fact be.

There has been some talk about amending the law to explicitly include transgendered people. Pauline Park of the New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy has advanced the notion in the past, and did so again Tuesday night. But some at the meeting cautioned against such an action, suggesting that if lawmakers respond negatively, transgender people will have no chance of being covered under the law.

"Right now we believe that we can prosecute [anti-transgendered bias crimes] under the statute," said Rosenbaum. But, he added, "there is danger in pressing for legislative change" in that when you start getting more specific with the law's language, "it's no longer so flexible."

Edidin added that if an amendment attempt fails, "then they'll say, 'See, it doesn't include transgender people.'"

Park discussed her concern that the law's language is ambiguous -- and thus open to interpretation.

And, she noted, there is "no [case law] evidence to suggest that transgendered people would be included under the law." In addition, Park said, district attorneys are elected -- meaning that without explicit protections, an incoming district attorney can apply his or her own take on the law, conceivably opting to not apply the statute to crimes against transgendered people.

"We cannot leave this to the discretion of a new district attorney," she stressed, adding the amendment idea should at least be floated before dismissing the concept.

Others at the meeting voiced objections to the hate crimes law for other reasons. During a question-and-answer period, Carolina Cordero Dyer, a board member of the Audre Lorde Project, a gay people of color organization based in Brooklyn, expressed concerns that the community had "adopted a tough-on-crime strategy." It is similar to the position she shared with the Blade in June, when she said, "We're living in a time where the criminal justice system is used to discipline and punish people of color and queer people of color, and youth in particular. In that kind of a context calling for tougher sentencing is really about emboldening that movement of criminalization of youth of color."

And community activist Bill Dobbs said there "are more than enough laws to keep everybody locked up."

But others offered another view. Donna Cartwright, a NYAGRA member and the forum's primary organizer, said explicit inclusion for transgender people would "send an important message." Another participant spoke about the hardships of the transitioning process (the concerns around losing one's job, the ever-present fear of harassment and abuse), "I need for this law to be specific," came the plea. "I need that in so many different ways."

This article appeared in the New York Blade issue of: December 1, 2000

TRANSGENDER PROFESSOR REFLECTS ON COMING OUT

By Jennifer Vanasco, October 12, 2000

Deirdre McCloskey had her epiphany in 1995.

She was driving along the tollway to Iowa City, Iowa, from the Chicago suburbs, where she had partied at the lesbian dance club Temptations the night before. At that time, she was still Donald McCloskey, an eminent economist. She pulled onto Route 88 thinking, "I am a 53-year-old heterosexual crossdresser." But, just for the "mental experiment," she asked herself whether she could be a woman-not a man who liked to wear women's clothes for fun, but a woman. And then, nearing DeKalb, she had her answer in a flash of insight: "I am a woman!" "Yes! I am a woman." She drove on to Iowa City, toward the university where she worked-and toward her wife. McCloskey, 58, is a professor of human sciences at the University of Illinois-Chicago. Her book "Crossing: A Memoir" was named one of The New York Times Book Review's notable books of the year. The book, released this month in paperback, is taut and gripping, a careful exploration of gender and identity. Thanks to cosmetic surgery, McCloskey, who stands 6 feet tall, has an almost pixie-like appearance. She wears light purple eyeshadow, her favorite color, to match her purple drop earrings and the zigzags of purple on her pink sweater. Her gestures are effeminate, but not overly so. She is not wearing much other makeup; her freckles give her a cute look that contrasts with the fierce intelligence she exhibits as author and professor. McCloskey's graduate and undergraduate students know she's transgendered. She tells them on the first day of class. She identifies as a "gender crosser" because she's had genital surgery; she uses "crossgenders" for anyone who crosses gender boundaries, such as stone butches and drag queens. "Epiphany" is McCloskey's word for how her true gender identity was revealed to her.

Continued on next page

TRANSGENDER PROFESSOR REFLECTS ON COMING OUT Continued from page 8

She had been crossdressing since she was 11, but she had regarded it as a hobby-like stamp collecting. It was not until that day on the highway that she realized she was transgendered. "I never thought of it as coming out to myself," she says. "I called it my epiphany, which is dangerous, because people view experiences like this as craziness." In fact, McCloskey says, most transgenders don't use the term "coming out" because to them, coming out means a gradual transition. Gender crossing, on the other hand, is often a sudden realization. "Like glass breaking," McCloskey says, recalling a friend's description. "I think it is more sudden than it is with homosexuality. One isn't walking along one day thinking that you're straight and then it suddenly hits you that you're gay." The other major difference between coming out as gay and coming out as transgender, McCloskey says, is that for transgenders it is impossible to simply "pass," the way that gays and lesbians can pass as straight. "For a gender crosser, there isn't any choice," McCloskey says. "You can't be a woman in secret." What

McCloskey means is that it is impossible not to notice that someone is crossing genders. She does note that for some female-to-male transgenders, the transitioning can be less noticeable, since women can wear pants without causing comment. But like gays and lesbians, transgenders who are fully transitioned must choose what to tell new people they come in contact with. "When you pass, there's an element of being back in the closet," McCloskey says. "There's a secret." McCloskey, however, tries hard not to just pass. "I had a friend in Iowa named Charles, a gay man about my age," McCloskey says. "He came out as a gay man in the 1960s, when he was married with kids. I said, 'Charles, I wake up in the morning and I feel so wonderful that I'm a woman. You've been out a long time--does this feeling ever go away?' "He said, 'No, it doesn't. I still wake up every morning thanking God I am who I am.' "It's a great feeling to be out," McCloskey continues. "I think we can say it to everyone, straight or gay-being yourself is really great." She rolls her eyes, the professor in her eclipsing the bubbly woman. "Duh. That should be self-evident to everyone," she concludes.

FASHION STYLE AND YOU

Q: People have always said that I have attractive eyes, so how can I bring attention to them?

A: You are a fortunate woman; great bodies are nice, good skin is a blessing, but gorgeous eyes are unforgettable. So how do you enhance yours?



Since you didn't specify your eye color, there are a few rules of thumb. Makeup artist Bobbi Brown has been quoted as saying that you don't want to "fight" your own eye color or draw attention to your shadow -- you want to pull attention to your own shade. Thus, lilac, lavender, and hues of brown (such as camel and taupe) will make blue eyes appear more blue rather than a blue in the same shade as your pupils. Green or hazel eyes follow the principle of "complimentary colors;" pinks, deep mauves, lavenders, rich plums, and eggplant shades will cause the green or hazel to appear more vibrant. Brown eyes are the easiest to complement; any color lighter or darker than your own brown will attract attention to your brown, even tints of brown itself. For standout brown eyes, choose shades in blue, steel blue/gray, plum, and eggplant.

Liquid eye liners can tend to look harsh. Pencil liners often tug too hard at my eyes. Most often, I work with some of my deepest eyeshadow as a liner, using a brush with tiny bristles for a fine or slightly smudged look. It is important to remember that liner is meant to frame the eyes. In order to achieve a subtle effect, line as closely to your lashes as possible to give the illusion of thicker lashes. A sponge is helpful to soften and smudge, as well as correct any mistakes. For extra definition, stipple, or dot, the liner between the lashes (careful here if you tend to have dark circles or puffiness under your eyes).

The only item more important than mascara for me is an eyelash curler. If you're not favored with long, spiral lashes, I suggest using one. It goes a long way toward creating the sought-after "come-hither" look.

This is the "year of the brow." Not bushy, as a teenage Brooke Shields in Endless Love, but more sophisticated and manicured. I recall a friend telling me long ago that "women should keep the shade they were born with; natural colors are best." My friend's advice was correct. I only tweeze stray hairs between my brows or unruly ones on the browbone.



COMING EVENTS



DUE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF LAST MINUTE
CHANGES, CALL TO VERIFY THE TIME AND
PLACE OF EVENTS

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| JANUARY 6 | SECRET'S APPRECIATION PARTY FOR THE BELLES – 9:00pm
Upstairs Lounge, Secrets, 20 Allen St. Buffalo |
| JANUARY 6 | ROCHESTER CD NETWORK - 6:30pm |
| JANUARY 13 | BUFFALO BELLES MEETING - 6:00pm |
| JANUARY 18-21 | FIRST EVENT 2001 (sponsored by the Tiffany Club of New England)
Crowne Plaza, Woburn, Massachusetts
(info: 781-891-9325 –Tues nights 7-11pm; www.tcne.org) |
| FEBRUARY 3 | ROCHESTER CD NETWORK - 6:30pm |
| FEBRUARY 10 | BUFFALO BELLES MEETING - 6:00pm |
| MARCH 3 | ROCHESTER CD NETWORK - 6:30pm |
| MARCH 10 | BUFFALO BELLES MEETING - 6:00pm |
| MARCH 21-25 | 15TH ANNUAL IFGE CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois (info: 610-759-1761) |
| JUNE 6 -10 | BE-ALL CONFERENCE – DETROIT 2001
Detroit, Michigan (info: 313-719-3267; www.xroads.org) |

THE "SAFER SEX" PRESENTATION THAT HAD BEEN SCHEDULED
FOR THE NOVEMBER 11th MEETING WILL BE RESCHEDULED
TO EITHER THE FEBRUARY OR MARCH MEETING.
LOOK FOR ANNOUNCEMENT IN NEXT ISSUE OF *THE JOURNEY*.